

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 119862

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NU

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION FMS CREDIT FOR MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

REF: WELTER-TUCKER TELCON 5/8/78

1. THE DEPARTMENT HAS AUTHORIZED THE USE OF THE FY 76 FMS CREDITS TO NICARAGUA FOR THE PURCHASE OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT TO BE USED AT THE MILITARY HOSPITAL IN MANAGUA. THE FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE HAS BEEN USED BY THE DEPARTMENT. EMBASSY MAY WISH TO DRAW UPON IT IN RESPONDING TO POSSIBLE INQUIRIES RE THIS MATTER.

2. BEGIN TEXT.

Q: IS IT TRUE THAT THE -U.S. HAS DECIDED TO HELP EQUIP A - MILITARY HOSPITAL IN NICARAGUA? I THOUGHT SUCH ASSISTANCE WAS BEING DENIED BECAUSE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HERE.

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A: NICARAGUA RECENTLY APPLIED TO USE SOME OF ITS REMAINING FMS CREDITS FROM FISCAL 1976 TO PURCHASE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT FOR A MILITARY HOSPITAL IN MANAGUA THAT ALSO SERVES CIVILIANS. THE FIGURE IS \$160,000.THERE ARE TWO POINTS TO BE MADE ABOUT THE DECISION TO GRANT THIS

APPLICATION:

-- THIS IS IN NO SENSE ASSISTANCE FOR MILITARY PURPOSES. THE HOSPITAL IN QUESTION IS USED BY CIVILIANS AS WELL AS BY MILITARY PERSONNEL. THE DECISION, MOREOVER, IS IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER ACTIONS, SUCH AS AID PROGRAMS, THAT HAVE RECENTLY BEEN APPROVED TO MEET BASIC HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND BENEFIT NEEDY PEOPLE IN THAT COUNTRY. THEY WERE APPROVED SO AS NOT TO DEPRIVE SUCH PEOPLE OF THE ASSISTANCE IN QUESTION; THE PROVISION OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT WILL BE ALONG THE SAME LINES. HOWEVER, THERE WILL BE NO RESUMPTION OF NON-MEDICAL FMS ASSISTANCE TO NICARAGUA AT THIS TIME.

-- USE OF THE CREDITS FOR THIS EQUIPMENT STILL LEAVES ABOUT \$300,000 OF UNUSED FMS CREDITS IN THE FISCAL 1976 CATEGORY. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH NICARAGUA WHICH ALLOCATES \$2.5 MILLION IN FMS FINANCING FOR FISCAL 1977, BUT NO SHIPMENTS HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED FOR SPECIFIC ITEMS UNDER THAT AGREEMENT.

Q: DID NICARAGUA REQUEST THE FUNDS FOR THE HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT? -

A: YES

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Q: DOES THIS INDICATE U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE SOMOZA REGIME?

A: I SAID THE DECISION, AND THE OTHER PROGRAMS I MENTIONED, RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF NICARAGUA'S POOR. IN APPROVING THEM THE U.S. REITERATES ITS POLICY OF STRICT NON-INTERVENTION IN NICARAGUA'S INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND OUR CONTINUING DESIRE FOR A STEADY, NON-VIOLENT TRANSITION TO GENUINE DEMOCRATIC RULE. VANCE

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